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DEPT FOR INL/PC - LMCKECHNIE, INL/T
DEPT ALSO FOR EUR/ERA, EUR/PGI, EUR/UBI
ONDCP FOR CHARLOTTE SISSON
DOJ FOR OIA
USEU FOR WAGNER AND DOJ
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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS: NARCOTICS CERTIFICATION UPDATE

REF: A. STATE 78495

[1](#)B. THE HAGUE 814

[1](#)C. THE HAGUE 1415

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[1](#)1. (U) Summary. In preparation for this year's interagency review for narcotics certification, Post submits the following update on Dutch anti-narcotics efforts and police-to-police cooperation. The Dutch remain focused on stemming the production and trade of ecstasy and are developing a second five year plan to deal with ecstasy. Police-to-police cooperation has continued to improve. End Summary.

Recent Counter-Narcotics Developments

[1](#)2. (SBU) According to an unpublished report by the Dutch National Crime Squad, Dutch police seized 1.85 million ecstasy (MDMA) tablets and 220 kilograms of MDMA powder in the Netherlands in 2005, a major decrease from the 5.6 million tablets and 303 kilograms of powder seized in 2004. Dutch police estimate that 1 kilogram of powder can be used to produce 10,000 MDMA tablets.

[1](#)3. (U) Tom Driessen, head of the National Crime Squad told ONDCP Director John Walters during Walters' April visit to The Hague that the establishment of the National Crime Squad, which is responsible for the investigation of organized crime, in early 2004 had significantly improved the effectiveness of the Dutch police against international criminal groups involved in narcotics production and trafficking. He said this was due in large part to the enhanced ability of the police to cooperate with the U.S. and other international partners; effective cooperation had

been more difficult previously, when investigation of serious crime was decentralized among 25 police regions. Driessen credited improved intelligence and investigations of money and trade flows for the Dutch ability to better combat ecstasy production and trade. He acknowledged that resource limitations continued to hamper their efforts to track and interdict illicit money flows. Walters commended the Dutch for their successful efforts to curb the ecstasy trade.

¶4. (U) Encouraged by the success of the initial GONL five-year plan (2002-2006) to combat ecstasy production and distribution, the Justice Ministry is currently developing a follow-on five-year ecstasy plan. The interagency plan will also involve the Interior, Finance, Defense and Health ministries. A June 6 EUROPOL Organized Crime Threat Analysis identified the production and distribution of synthetic drugs by organized crime groups based in Belgium and the Netherlands as the top law enforcement priority for the Dutch. Justice Ministry officials welcomed the EUROPOL appraisal as helpful to their efforts to ensure that combating the ecstasy trade will remain a top law enforcement priority.

Police-to-Police Cooperation

¶5. (SBU) While Dutch judicial system and privacy restrictions continue to hamper direct police-to-police intelligence sharing in the absence of a formal Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) request, progress is being made on effective operational cooperation. As a result of the April 2005 Next Steps bilateral law enforcement discussions, since October 2005 two DEA agents have been co-located with the National Crime Squad cocaine unit in The Hague, which specializes in South American and Caribbean narcotics investigation. Under the co-location arrangement, DEA agents have access to the unit's intelligence and tactical officers, and are able to pass and receive police-to-police information in an expeditious manner. Since the co-location began, joint investigations have led to the seizure of roughly 6,200 kilograms of cocaine and the arrest of 32 defendants. DEA reached agreement in June 2006 to co-locate a third agent with the National Crime Squad's Helmond unit in the southern Netherlands. Co-location with the Helmond

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unit, which is expected to begin this summer, was a top objective of DEA because the Helmond unit specializes in ecstasy and precursor chemical investigations.

¶6. (SBU) Since late 2005, Dutch police have also responded positively to DEA requests to conduct controlled deliveries without an MLAT request; previously, they had turned down all such informal requests. In the first six months of 2006, the Dutch have conducted six controlled deliveries of cocaine at the request of DEA on a police-to-police basis. U.S. police conducted one controlled delivery of 3,700 ecstasy tablets at the request of the Dutch. This was the only request presented by the Dutch in the past seven months, but illustrates their interest in expanding law enforcement cooperation.

¶7. (SBU) DEA credits the ongoing successful information sharing between Dutch police and the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) for improving police-to-police cooperation in the Netherlands. Over 6,000 names have been shared in the Schiphol Blacklist program in which EPIC and Dutch police share names of known or suspected drug traffickers for entry in the other's database. During a June 29 meeting to review the Blacklist program, DEA, Dutch police and Justice Ministry officials all agreed that drug trafficker data is flowing smoothly and that the program is working well.

¶8. (SBU) Improved coordination between DEA The Hague and Dutch police has led to several recent major busts,

including the seizure of 46 kilograms of cocaine at Schiphol airport on June 19, 2006. In the Schiphol case, the Dutch Royal Military Police (KMAR), which is responsible for border control, acted on a DEA tip to intercept two arriving couriers, who will be prosecuted in the Netherlands on charges of importation of a controlled substance.

¶9. (SBU) On May 31 and June 1, 2006, the DEA office in The Hague, in conjunction with other DEA offices and the Royal Dutch National Police (KLPD) executed international arrest and search warrants against an international ecstasy trade and money laundering ring. Of the ten suspects arrested, eight will be prosecuted in the United States and two will be prosecuted in the Netherlands. The KLPD National Crime Squad unit in Helmond provided DEA with outstanding support throughout the two year investigation.

¶10. (U) Dutch authorities attended a DEA-sponsored precursor chemical strategy conference in Hong Kong in February 2006 and took part in DEA's International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC) in Montreal in May 2006.

International Cooperation

¶11. (U) Bilateral cooperation on demand reduction research has continued in the past year, with scientific exchanges between the Netherlands Organization for Health Research and Development (ZonMW) and the Trimbos Institute and U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). ONDCP Director Walters and Health Minister Hoogervorst agreed to consider expanding joint research to include studies on long-term drug consumption during Walters's April 2006 visit.

¶12. (SBU) The Dutch Justice Ministry signed a MOU with the Chinese government to expedite the sharing of customs information and better track shipments of precursor chemicals in 2004. The Dutch continue to negotiate a MOU with the Chinese that would cover direct police-to-police operational cooperation in tracking precursor chemicals. Justice Ministry officials acknowledge that the negotiations are proceeding very slowly. The Dutch are also debating internally how extensive the MOU should be, due to concerns about entering into a broad cooperative police agreement with a country that has a poor human rights record.

¶13. (U) The Dutch government hosted a conference on enhancing EU anti-drug cooperation in the Caribbean in February 2006. The GONL is pressing the European Commission

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and member states to increase their financial commitments to counter-narcotics efforts in the Caribbean region.

Comment

¶14. (U) The Dutch government has continued to make substantial progress in the last year against ecstasy production and trafficking. In particular, they are more effectively targeting international criminal organizations involved in the trade. Police-to-police cooperation and information sharing has also improved significantly; the recent agreement on the co-location of DEA agents in a second key National Crime Squad drug unit is expected to result in additional successful joint investigations. End Comment.

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